



# LEOFF Plan 1 Rules for State Elected Officials and Full-time Local Officials

Washington State Department of Retirement Systems

The following rules apply to state elected officials and full-time local elected officials who choose to be covered by LEOFF Plan 1 while in office. Additional rules governing all LEOFF Plan 1 members are summarized in the LEOFF Plan 1 Member Handbook.

## **You are eligible to participate in LEOFF Plan 1 if:**

- You were elected or appointed to a statewide office (includes election to the state legislature), or
- You were elected or appointed to a local or political subdivision office where the elected position is considered full time, and
- You are a LEOFF Plan 1 member when elected or appointed to office.

Retirement system membership is not required for elected officials.

You have the additional option of becoming a PERS Plan 2 member during your time in office.

**If you are a former LEOFF Plan 1 member** at the time of your election you are not eligible to resume LEOFF Plan 1 membership, however, you may be eligible to become a PERS Plan 2 member. See the PERS Plan 2 State Elected Official rules sheet.

## **How do I continue LEOFF Plan 1 membership?**

To continue membership you must notify the Department of Retirement Systems (DRS) that you are taking a leave of absence to serve in elected office and wish to continue LEOFF Plan 1 membership. If you are elected to additional terms of office and wish to continue LEOFF Plan 1 membership, you must reapply to DRS prior to the beginning of each new term.

## **Your membership decision is final:**

Once you have established retirement system membership, you must remain a member until you separate from all eligible public employment.

## **How much service credit will I earn?**

Service in any state elective position is considered full-time service. Thus, for each full year of legislative service, you are eligible to receive 12 months of service credit.

If you were elected to a full-time local or political subdivision office, you receive a full month of service credit for each month served.

You may choose at the beginning of your term to remain a LEOFF 1 member but not pay contributions or receive service credit.

# LEOFF Plan 1 Rules for State Elected and Full-Time Local Officials (continued)

## Washington State Department of Retirement Systems

### Can I receive credit for past elected service?

If you choose not to participate in LEOFF Plan 1 during your term of elected service, you cannot purchase credit for that service at a later date.

### How much will I contribute to my retirement fund?

You will contribute a percentage of your salary each month to your retirement plan. Your contributions will be based on the salary for the LEOFF Plan 1 position you held at the time you took a leave of absence to serve in elected office. LEOFF Plan 1 contribution rates are set periodically by the Legislature.

### What will my retirement benefit be?

LEOFF Plan 1 retirement benefit formulas are the same for all LEOFF Plan 1 members. The formula for calculating your monthly service retirement benefit varies according to your length of service.

#### Fewer Than 10 Years of Service:

Months of service credit / 12 x 1 percent x final average salary

#### At Least 10 but Fewer Than 20 Years of Service:

Months of service credit / 12 x 15 percent x final average salary

#### Twenty or More Years of Service:

Months of service credit / 12 x 2 percent x final average salary

### Final Average Salary (FAS):

- If you've held the same position or rank for at least 12 months preceding retirement, it is the basic salary for that position or rank at the time of your retirement.
- If you've not held the same position or rank for at least 12 months, it is the monthly average of your highest-paid 24 consecutive months within your last 10 years of credited service.
- If you are disabled, it is your basic salary at the time of disability retirement.
- If you are a vested member who separated from employment before becoming eligible to retire, it is your basic salary at the time you left service.

If you established membership in LEOFF after February 18, 1974, your service retirement benefit is limited to 60 percent of your final average salary.

### What if I am a retired LEOFF Plan 1 member when elected?

If you are a retired LEOFF Plan 1 member who is elected to office, you cannot return to active LEOFF Plan 1 status while serving in office.

If you were a PERS or TRS member prior to 3/19/76, you have the option of returning to membership in the system you belonged to.

If you had less than 15 years of service in LEOFF when you retired and did not retire for disability, you are eligible to enroll in PERS Plan 2.

### Can I retire from LEOFF Plan 1 while in elected office?

You must separate from service to become eligible to receive retirement benefits.

# LEOFF Plan 1 Rules for State Elected and Full-Time Local Officials (continued)

## Washington State Department of Retirement Systems

### How do I enroll?

Contact DRS and provide the following information:

- Name
- Social Security Number
- Address and phone number
- Position title and employer
- Beginning date of all elected official service

DRS will verify your service, and send you an enrollment letter and application.

### You can write DRS at:

- Department of Retirement Systems
- PO Box 48380
- Olympia, WA 98504-8380

### Questions?

To discuss the application of these rules to your specific case, call the DRS Central Reception Desk and ask to speak to the Legislative and Legal Services Unit. Be prepared to provide the beginning and ending dates for all of your elected service.

DRS's **central telephone number** is toll free 1-800-547-6657 or in Olympia (360) 664-7000.

**Office hours** are 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday through Friday, except legal holidays.

### THIS PUBLICATION IS A SUMMARY

This brochure does not contain a complete description of the law. If there are conflicts between the information contained in this brochure and retirement law, the applicable law will govern.

This publication is available in alternate formats. For information contact DRS Member Publications at (360) 664-7278.